

States continues. IREX, a non-profit organization dedicated to education, civil society, and media, has been working to support Iraq's nascent independent media sector as part of a USAID civil society project—the Iraqi Civil Society and Independent Media Program.

We strongly believe that a vibrant and professional independent media sector is crucial to a stable and democratic Iraq. Capable Iraqi individuals and organizations are working with U.S. support and risking their lives for the sake of media freedom, but much work remains to be done. However, our work is slated to end on June 30, 2006 due to lack of funding for democracy initiatives. Key media initiatives and successes supported by the U.S. Government that face closure with an end of U.S. assistance, include:

The National Iraqi News Agency ([www.ninanews.com](http://www.ninanews.com)), the first independent commercial news agency in the Arab World. After only 7 months, approximately 1500 NINA stories are carried by more than 50 Iraqi media outlets each month. NINA sets a standard of professionalism for the media sector and has survived the effects of two bombings yet carried on its work unimpeded.

Iraqis for Public Broadcasting is a group of dedicated civil society and media professionals who have served as a public watchdog to fight government and political interference in the Iraqi Media Network. The group has developed a new public broadcasting law that could help develop IMN into the Arab world's first independent public broadcaster.

The Iraqi Media Network, meant to be the public broadcaster for Iraq, has been beset by attempts at political control of its news and public affairs programming. IREX is one of the few organizations that has been able to work inside IMN with its journalism staff, assisting in development of programming on the elections and the constitution, providing citizens a forum for debate. IREX is currently advising IMN on two new programs that will link the different regions of Iraq as a contribution to building a sense of a democratic Iraqi identity spanning ethnic and religious divides.

Training and support for journalists and media outlets throughout Iraq will end. The program has provided training to Kurds, Sunnis, Shias, in many cases bringing the groups together. Women have been a key target for the trainings.

We welcome and commend your ongoing commitment to democracy assistance for Iraq, not only independent media development, but also in other key components of democratic development such as civil society, elections, political processes, and labor and business development.

Sincerely,

MARK POMAR,  
*President.*

IFES,  
*Washington, DC, April 13, 2006.*

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,  
*U.S. Senate,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of IFES and our experts working on election related projects in Iraq, I am writing to thank you for the thought and attention you have devoted to sustaining a steady stream of funding for critical democracy promotion activities in Iraq. As a non-profit organization with an active presence in Iraq, we greatly appreciate your efforts to highlight the democratic needs of the Iraqi people for lawmakers and policymakers alike.

As you know, IFES has been involved with the democratization process in Iraq since October 2003 when we first conducted an assessment of the political situation followed by

the development of electoral scenarios and cost models for Coalition Provisional Authority. Since September of 2004, IFES has provided technical assistance to the Independent Election Commission of Iraq (IECI), while at the same time providing significant technical and material support for the conduct of three electoral processes in the country as part of the UN-led International Election Technical Assistance Team (TEAT).

Helping democratic institutions find the strength and creativity to work in hostile political environments is one of the most difficult tasks in democracy assistance, but it is a task with which we have experience and through which we have achieved notable successes. Going forward, Iraqi election organizers face a number of challenges surrounding the creation of a new and permanent election management body by the Council of Representatives, the design and implementation of a new voter registration system, conduct of local elections in April 2007, and post-election support for possible referenda on the constitution and regional issues. Our work in Iraq, which has merely begun, has given us a unique, firsthand perspective on the post-invasion political and electoral transition in Iraq. It is our strong view that there has never been a more critical time to sustain and strengthen Iraq's democratic process. Continued support for our work after July 1, 2006, when IFES' current programming is set to end, will help to ensure the future of a fair and transparent electoral process in Iraq.

Your commitment and engagement on this matter is timely and essential and we commend you for your sustained vision and focus to promote not only our work, but that of other key democracy promotion organizations.

Sincerely,

RICHARD SOUDRIETTE,  
*President and CEO, IFES.*

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment, as modified?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

The amendment (No. 3686), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 3688, AS MODIFIED

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand there is an understanding that we vote at noon-time and I have 1 minute remaining.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the Senator is correct. It is the intention the pending amendment be set aside so we can consider Kennedy amendment No. 3688, as modified, upon which the yeas and nays have been ordered. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Massachusetts be recognized until the hour of 12 o'clock, at which time we will have a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. In the 45 seconds remaining, I indicate to the Members of the Senate this amendment has the complete support of all the public health officials and departments virtually across the country; the public health community virtually universally appreciates and understands the importance of this program. It does also have the complete support of the first responders. If we want to do something that is going to help to protect our first responders, in public health emergencies and with the dangers of a pandemic, this is an amendment to do so.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator yields the floor. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3688, as modified, on which the yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 107 Leg.]

#### YEAS—53

Akaka	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Feingold	Murray
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Harkin	Obama
Bingaman	Hatch	Pryor
Boxer	Inouye	Reed
Byrd	Jeffords	Reid
Cantwell	Johnson	Roberts
Carper	Kennedy	Salazar
Chafee	Kerry	Sarbanes
Clinton	Kohl	Schumer
Coleman	Landrieu	Smith
Collins	Lautenberg	Snowe
Conrad	Leahy	Specter
Dayton	Levin	Stabenow
DeWine	Lieberman	Talent
Dodd	Lincoln	Wyden
Dorgan	Menendez	

#### NAYS—46

Alexander	Dole	McCain
Allard	Domenici	McConnell
Allen	Ensign	Murkowski
Bennett	Enzi	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Frist	Santorum
Brownback	Graham	Sessions
Bunning	Grassley	Shelby
Burns	Gregg	Stevens
Burr	Hagel	Sununu
Chambliss	Hutchison	Thomas
Coburn	Inhofe	Thune
Cochran	Isakson	Vitter
Cornyn	Kyl	Voinovich
Craig	Lott	Warner
Crapo	Lugar	
DeMint	Martinez	

#### NOT VOTING—1

Rockefeller

The amendment (No. 3688), as modified, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Delaware.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 3717

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 3717.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?